

United States Senate

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

March 2, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500-0005

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your letter. Republicans also believe that last week's health care summit at Blair House was quite productive. It provided a forum for the kind of open and broad-based discussion of ideas that our constituents have been demanding for months. It should be clear by now that most Americans oppose the massive health spending bills that Democrats in Washington have been attempting to push through Congress. Last week's summit gave us an opportunity to show our constituents that there is a better way to proceed with the kind reforms they truly want.

Particularly encouraging was your apparent support at the summit for a number of commonsense ideas that Republicans have long promoted as a way of targeting the high cost of health care. All of us agree that cost is the core problem, and following last week's summit many of us were hopeful that these proposals could form the basis for a health care bill that Americans would actually embrace. Indeed, that's what many of us thought the summit was all about: finding areas of agreement upon which we could build a new bill, since Americans so clearly oppose the old ones.

It was with this in mind that we were surprised and disappointed with your latest proposal to simply paper a few of these commonsense proposals over an unsalvageable bill. The American people are asking us for step-by-step reforms that target cost and expand access, not a couple of commonsense ideas layered over a rewrite of one-sixth of the economy, a massive expansion of the federal government's role in their daily lives, and higher taxes and cuts to Medicare to pay for it. The primary virtue of the ideas we agreed on at the summit is that they would lower costs and expand access without requiring these things. That's the kind of reform Americans will support.

We respectfully encourage you to consider a new approach to reform, one that does not cut Medicare to fund a trillion dollar takeover of the health care system or impose job-killing taxes in the middle of a recession. We encourage you to join with Democrats and Republicans in Congress in listening to what the American people have been saying for months. Americans are telling us quite plainly that in order to reform health care, we should scrap the bills they have rejected and start over with commonsense, step-by-step reforms.

Page 2
March 2, 2010

We would also ask you to encourage Democrats in Congress to scrap something else; namely, their last-ditch plan to jam some version of their original bill through Congress and past the American people with the highly partisan process known as reconciliation. It should be clear by now how Americans feel about forcing massive policy changes through Congress by way of a back room deal. The fact that Democrats in Congress still seem intent on this approach suggests they are completely out of step with the public. Now is not the time to repeat the same mistakes that brought us here. It's time to listen to the people, and start over with reforms that lower costs.

Sincerely,



MITCH McCONNELL
REPUBLICAN LEADER

MM/rw